

Title IV, A: Safe and Healthy Students Mental Health and Suicide Prevention

Safe and Healthy Students: Title IV, Part A

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) allows school districts to utilize Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants (Title IV, Part A) to improve school conditions for student learning. When students are healthy and feel safe and supported, they are more likely to succeed in school. Title IV, Part A program funds may be used for programs or activities that foster safe, healthy, supportive, and drug-free school environments, including direct student services and professional development and training for school staff.

Mental Health and Suicide Prevention

Prevention of youth suicide, violence, substance use/misuse, and the early identification and treatment of behavioral health disorders are most effective when students, staff, parents, and community members have access to prevention information and resources.

A 2016 report by the Child Mind Institute found that one in five children suffer from a mental health or learning disorder and 80 percent of chronic mental disorders start in childhood. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, suicide rates among Washington's youth are higher than the national average, and suicide is the second leading cause of death for Washington youth between the ages of 10 and 24 (2017).

In the 2016 Washington Healthy Youth Survey, student responses indicated the following:

- 28% of eighth graders, 34% of 10th graders, and 37% of 12th graders felt so sad or hopeless for 2 weeks or more that they stopped doing their usual activities.
- 13% of 8th graders, 17% of 10th graders, and 16% of 12th graders reported making a suicide plan.
- 12% of 8th graders, 15% of 10th graders, and 13% of 12th graders report there are not adults for them to turn to when feeling sad or hopeless.

Schools report an increase in need for behavioral health supports and Washington superintendents reported mental health and trauma supports as the highest student support need according to a survey done by the League of Education Voters Foundation Survey (November 2017).

Use of Title IV, A Funds for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention

School districts may use Title IV, Part A funds to develop and implement their plan for recognizing and responding to signs of emotional or behavioral distress in students required by [RCW 28A.320.127](#).



The purpose of the plan is to protect the health and well-being of all students by having procedures in place to prevent, assess the risk of, intervene in, and respond to students in crisis. Development of the plan requires coordination with crisis response supports and staff training.

School districts are encouraged to coordinate the use of Title IV, Part A funds as part of broader school and community programs or initiatives. Examples of allowable uses of Title IV, Part A funds to support Mental Health and Suicide Prevention may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Consultation and support in developing a crisis response plan.
- Purchase of curriculum and training materials that show evidence of mental health promotion/suicide prevention outcomes.
- Hiring new staff or dedicating additional time for existing staff to coordinate suicide prevention efforts or provide mental health services and supports.
- Contracting with outside providers to bring training to the district.
- Paying the registration, travel costs, and substitute reimbursement for staff to attend targeted professional learning activities.
- Paying the registration and travel costs for students to participate in education/training opportunities related to suicide prevention and mental health promotion efforts.

Additional Resources

Mental health and suicide prevention are included as part of the [Health Education K-12 Learning Standards – RCW 28A.230.095](#)

School districts must adopt a **plan for recognition, screening, and response to emotional or behavioral distress** in students, substance abuse, violence, and youth suicide – [RCW 28A.320.127](#)

A school districts plan must also include training for recognition of **sexual abuse, notification requirements, and staff response procedures** – [RCW 28A.320.127](#), [RCW 28A.320.160](#), [RCW 28A.400.317](#)

Model School District Plan for recognition, initial screening, and response to emotional or behavioral distress – [Model Plan Template](#)

The Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) maintains the [list of approved trainings](#) required for school nurses, counselors, psychologists, and social workers.

Behavioral Health Supports and Resources

For a list of helpful resources and descriptions, please visit the [Behavioral Health Supports and Resources](#) document located on the OSPI Suicide, Intervention, and Postvention webpage.

CARE: Confident Action and Referral by Educators

CARE module <https://moodle1.ospi.k12.wa.us/enrol/index.php?id=88>

School staff or other community stakeholders who are interested in how to access Title IV, Part A for mental health and suicide prevention should begin by contacting the individual in the school district with responsibility for administering federal programs. For assistance with the program planning process: [Program Planning Guide](#).



For More Information

For more information on mental health and suicide prevention education:

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For general questions and information about how school districts can apply for Title IV, Part A funds:

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[Title IV, Part A](#)

